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CHORAL PRAISE — Members of the Blue Mountain College Chorale perform November 1 at the final session of the 171st annual meeting of the Mississippi Baptist Convention at First Church, Jackson. Blue Mountain College is one of three institutions of higher learning affiliated with the Mississippi Baptist Convention. The others are Mississippi College in Clinton and William Carey University in Hattiesburg. (Photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)

Messengers approve record CP budget

By William H. Perkins Jr.
Editor

Messengers from the Mississippi Baptist Convention's 2,114 churches approved without opposition a record 2007 Mississippi Cooperative Program budget of \$33,188,934, during their annual meeting October 31-November 1 at First Church in Jackson.

The 2007 CP budget represents a 5.99% increase over the current budget and will result in \$11,616,127, or 35%, going to SBC causes. The SBC percentage, which has held steady for several years, is a 5.99% dollar-for-dollar increase over the current year.

Previously, messengers had chosen to freeze the 2006 Cooperative Program budget at the same level as 2005 because of the devastation Hurricane Katrina wrought on the southern half of the state in August 2005, but recovery and rebuilding efforts are now well underway and messengers apparently felt the time had come to signal a new giving goal.

Among the highlights of the 2007 Cooperative Program budget are an increase of nearly 3.8% in church planting funds, from \$500,460 in 2006 to \$519,328, and inclusion of new church starts in Mississippi as an item in the Challenge portion of the 2007 budget.

The Challenge portion of the budget is the amount of gifts given once the budget has been met. For 2007, messengers approved the use of the Challenge portion to fund:

- Christian Education: 50%
- Southern Baptist Missions: 30%
- New Church Starts in Mississippi: 20%

Conference facility to relocate

Messengers also voted to permanently close the convention's Gulfshore Assembly near Pass Christian, sell the property, and relocate the conference facility after it was destroyed by Hurricane Katrina.

Larry Otis, chairman of the Conference Ministry Study Committee that was charged with making a recommendation on the future



NEW OFFICERS — Mississippi Baptist Convention officers, elected during the October 31-November 1 annual meeting of the Mississippi Baptist Convention at First Church, Jackson, include (from left) Second Vice-President David Hamilton, pastor of West Heights Church, Pontotoc; First Vice-President Joel Medina, pastor of Iglesia Internacional las Americas in Carthage; President Clarence Cooper, pastor of Emmanuel Church, Grenada; Recording Secretary Gus Merritt, retired pastor from Newton; and Assistant Recording Secretary Michael Weeks, pastor of Pleasant Hill Church, Olive Branch. (Photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)

of the facility, told messengers, "The committee is convinced, from its research and input received, that Mississippi Baptists want and need a conference center with the capabilities of our assembly. In fact, we believe strongly that future facilities should be designed and equipped to reach even more souls for God's glory and Kingdom growth."

However, Otis said that rebuilding estimates, strict new building codes, and post-Katrina insurance rates were among the factors that convinced the committee restoring Gulfshore was unfeasible.

"After prayerful deliberation and analysis of conference ministry needs in Mississippi and the existing conditions at the Gulfshore Baptist Assembly site, replacement cost factors, governmental building codes and regulations, insurance costs and availability; the Conference Ministry Study Committee offers the following recommendation:

"That the Mississippi Baptist Convention relocate our primary conference facilities and offer the coastal property for sale, with proceeds made available for acquisition of a new site, design of facilities, and/or construction of conference facilities. Furthermore, we recommend that the implementation of this recommendation be entrusted to the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board," said Otis, a messenger from Calvary Church, Tupelo.

Otis explained that the committee believed the convention board could best handle the details of the sale due to board members' status as legal trustees of the convention, and also because they are in a position to safeguard the property from falling into the hands of casinos or "other objectionable businesses."

Messengers applauded Otis' appeal to prevent casinos from purchasing the land, and then voted 587-29 to accept the committee's recommendation.

Convention officers

In other business, messengers elected Clarence Cooper, pastor of Emmanuel Church in Grenada, to a second term as convention president. Joel Medina, pastor of Iglesia Internacional Las Americas in Carthage, was elected to serve a second term as first vice-president. David Hamilton, pastor of West Heights Church in Pontotoc, was elected to a first term as second vice-president.

Retired pastor Gus Merritt of Newton was reelected as recording secretary. Michael Weeks, pastor of Pleasant Hill Church in Olive Branch, was reelected assistant recording secretary.

All officers were elected without opposition.

Resolutions

Messengers also approved five resolutions, including:

- support for the Mississippi Baptist Memorial to the Missing, designed to draw attention to the 50 million babies that have been killed since abortion was legalized by the 1973 U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Roe v. Wade*.

The Memorial, located outside at the northwest corner of the Baptist Building in downtown Jackson, is a massive see-through container designed to hold 50 million pennies. Each penny symbolizes the death of one baby since *Roe v. Wade* ruling.

(cont'd on pg. 5)



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Making our hearts race

We are a blessed generation of Mississippi Baptists. On the heels of celebrating the 200th anniversary of the incredible Kingdom work that has been accomplished in Mississippi since the first Baptist association was formed in what was then the unsettled Natchez Territory in 1806, comes the 171st annual session of the Mississippi Baptist Convention last week in Jackson.

God has indeed done great things through Mississippi Baptists. To Him be all glory! Looking back on this annual session, there's little doubt that the people of the Mississippi Baptist Convention are poised to continue the Lord's work well into the future, and to be a part of the continuing Christian enterprise to help bring Mississippi and the world to Jesus.

If that doesn't get your heart racing like nothing else, maybe you'd better head to the emergency room to be sure your ticker is still working.

Messengers from the cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention voted to adopt a record Cooperative Program budget of \$33,188,934 — a 5.99% increase over the current budget. As reported elsewhere in this issue, budgeteers on the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board felt it prudent in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina to keep the 2006 Cooperative Program budget at the level of the previous year, but Mississippi



COMMITTEE REPORTS — Larry Otis (at pulpit), chairman of the Conference Ministry Study Committee, delivers the committee's recommendation on October 31 at the Mississippi Baptist Convention annual meeting that Gulfshore Assembly near Pass Christian be permanently closed, the property sold, and the conference facility be relocated. Members of the committee that made the recommendation are standing behind Otis. (Photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)

Baptists have come through despite the hardships of hurricane recovery and have currently given \$28,200,156 through the end of October.

That figure represents a 6.23% increase in giving over the same period last year and keeps the current Cooperative Program budget more than eight percent ahead of needs. That doesn't include gifts to support local church ministries and special offerings like the Margaret Lackey State Mission Offering, the Annie Armstrong Offering for North American Missions, and the Lottie Moon Offering for International Missions. Mississippi Baptists are a generous people when it comes to providing the financial means to fulfill the Great Commission (Matt 28:18-20) and our Acts 1:8 mandate.

Messengers also decided to shutter the convention's beloved Gulfshore Assembly near Pass Christian and sell the property, after Hurricane Katrina dealt it a death blow from which it could not recover. In presenting the report of the Conference Ministry Study Committee, Chairman Larry Otis said, "The committee is convinced, from its research and input received, that Mississippi Baptists want and need a conference center with the capabilities of our assembly."

"In fact, we believe strongly that future facilities should be designed and equipped to reach even more souls for God's glory and Kingdom growth. Future facilities must complement the tremendous work already taking place at Camp Garaywa and Central Hills. This comprehensive approach to conference ministries will shape future decisions."

If Mississippi Baptists heed the committee's conclusion that a conference center of Gulfshore's capabilities is needed, we will move forward "to reach even more souls" through our state's conference ministry program. That is an exciting prospect, isn't it? Again, if that doesn't get your heart racing...

God has loaded up Mississippi Baptists with important tasks, and so it has been since the first Baptists stepped off those Mississippi River flatboats and formed Mississippi Baptist Association 200 years ago. He knows us, and He trusts us with important work.

For our generation, as well as those yet to be born if Jesus tarries, may we be found faithful. That is our past and, if we so choose, our future.


(Final in a two-part series)

Since February 1975, when God led me to establish the Jerry Drace Evangelistic Association, He has allowed me to preach in more than 1,000 churches across our nation. In His divine providence He has placed me in the company of some of His choicest servants as well as some who seek to be served.

Throughout the past 31 years I have kept notes and observations on each of the pastors, staffs, and churches where my team and I have been privileged to present the claims of Christ. I am sure some of these observations will be misunderstood; others will be embraced. I wish to share only 13 in hopes they will serve as a catalyst for your own reflections. (Editor's note: The first six points were published in the November 2 issue of *The Baptist Record*.)

- I have observed unethical and even immoral conduct by religious leaders with little or no remorse on their part once their deeds were made public. When Christian leaders become legends in their own minds the ice has already broken.

- I have observed the policies of the community dictating the policies of the church, especially in the area of sports. We now schedule the



GUEST OPINION:

Observations from three decades

By Jerry Drace, evangelist
Jackson, Tn.

events of the church around the athletic calendar of our schools or recreational departments. We have surrendered to the god of sports. We even close our churches on Sunday nights if it is a national holiday. Good thing God doesn't cancel His services.

- I have observed more and more churches teaching the latest trends in church growth rather than the doctrines of the Scriptures. We have churches full of people who can quote from the latest church growth guru, but for the life of them they can neither recall nor defend any of the doctrines of the Bible. We can be seeker friendly and purpose driven, but if we fail to seek Christ and find our purpose in Him alone, all the books, seminars and mega conferences will only impede the salvation of the lost and the disciplining of the saved.

- I have observed us becoming a people who enjoy the expression of worship without encountering the experience of worship. No one enjoys beautiful choruses more than me, yet with the freedom of style which this has ushered into our churches we must be careful not to allow our performance to overshadow His presence.

- I have observed religion becoming big business. Christian recording artists are now referred to as superstars and certain pastors are touted as religious CEOs. Religious leaders have evolved from troubleshooters of society to trendsetters in society. We have religious personalities who are known as much for their political creeds as their theological convictions. Simple statements from the Bible are marketed into multimillion dollar enterprises.

- I have observed a few proclaimers who have comprised their call because of a cowardly commitment to the truths of God's Word. This brings about a deceitful delivery of devilish doctrines. The end result is a man who panders to the people and prostitutes the proclamation in the process. When wickedness enters the doors of the church it soon spreads throughout the land without any opposition. Satan himself could not have better allies than pastors who refuse to preach the truths of the Scriptures and church members who refuse to live godly lives.

- I have observed a righteous remnant in every church who have a hunger and thirst for experiencing God to the fullest. It is this group, both young and old, who will pass on the teachings and doctrines of Holy Scripture to the next generation. Praise God for ministers and members who are not driven by fashions and trends, but remain faithful and true to fulfilling the Great Commission.

Drace, whose commentary appears courtesy of Baptist Press, is a vocational evangelist and past president of the Conference of Southern Baptist Evangelists. In addition to revivals and area wide crusades, he and his wife, Becky, conduct Hope for the Home conferences. For more information, visit www.jdea.tn.org and www.HopefortheHome.org.

IMB trustees approve \$288.9 million budget

ST. LOUIS (BP) — Trustees of the Southern Baptist International Mission Board (IMB) adopted a \$288.9 million budget for 2007, appointed 67 new missionaries, and heard a report of key results from mission work worldwide during their Oct. 30-Nov. 1 meeting in St. Louis.

The 2007 mission budget projects an increase of \$6.4 million, or about 2.2%, over this year's total. It anticipates receipts of more than \$105 million from Southern Baptist mission giving through the Cooperative Program. More than half of the total budget will rely on giving to this year's Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions, which has a goal of \$150 million.

The entire Lottie Moon goal amount has been budgeted, with \$141.2 million earmarked for mission operating expenses and the remaining \$8.8 million for capital needs overseas. Remaining budget receipts are anticipated from investments, hunger, and relief giving (which is spent exclusively for those ministries) and other income.

The majority of next year's projected overseas budget, more than \$206 million, will go to support more than 5,100 missionaries worldwide, who will receive a small salary increase. Missionary medical costs continue to rise, and the dollar remains generally weak against many foreign currencies.

Projected U.S. expenditures, at nearly \$44 million, will total about 15.2% of the 2007 budget. They will include salary increases for IMB home office staff members.

New missionaries

IMB trustees also appointed 67 new missionaries during their meeting. Trustees, new missionaries, family members, and Missouri Baptists gathered for the Oct. 31 appointment service at the Show Me Center in Cape Girardeau. The event was held in conjunction with the Missouri Baptist Convention's annual meeting. This appointment service brings to 306 the total long-term missionary appointments for 2006. Combined with 470 anticipated new short-term workers, the total count for IMB workers approved in 2006 should reach approximately 780 by year's end.

Southern Baptist Convention President Frank Page, pastor of First Church in Taylors, S.C., spoke during the service, challenging the new missionaries to "remember who you are."

"You're a Jesus missionary first and foremost," Page said. "Remember who you belong to, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith."

Despite major advances worldwide, IMB President Jerry Rankin reminded the new workers of the unfinished missions task: "Thousands of unreached

groups where there is yet to be a church, where there is yet to be a missionary assigned, where there are yet to be believers worshipping and giving glory to our Lord."

Overseas results

During their business sessions, trustees got a global update on the true magnitude of that task. They received the IMB's latest Annual Statistical Report, compiled from statistics reported by more than 2,000 entities including mission teams assigned to reach ethnic people groups, cities, and other population segments. The report covers the 2005 calendar year.

The board's 5,100-plus missionaries and their international Baptist partners baptized more than 475,000 new believers last year, started nearly 23,500 churches and engaged 104 people groups for the first time. They also planted churches among 19 people groups where no Baptist churches previously existed, including 13 with no evangelical churches of any kind.

"For 13 of these people groups, for the first time in their history there is a church representing our Lord and Savior to an unreached people that have never heard the Gospel, don't have a Bible in their language and have never known what church looks like," said Gordon Fort, IMB vice president for overseas operations.

Among other significant results for 2005, Southern Baptist missionaries and their partners:

- engaged a total of 1,170 people groups worldwide, three-quarters of whom are classified by mission researchers as unreached (less than two percent of the population claiming evangelical Christian faith).
- engaged for the first time 104 people groups, 73 of whom are unreached, with a combined population of nearly 100 million.
- engaged 120 unreached urban centers, including 12 for the first time.
- started 23,486 churches and more than 10,600 "outreach groups" (potential future churches). That brought total partner churches worldwide to 135,252, with a combined membership of 8.8 million, and outreach groups to 55,723.
- baptized 475,072 new believers, which is about 1,300 each day or one each minute.
- involved nearly 510,000 new believers in discipleship training, in addition to more than 1.1 million existing church members in discipleship groups.
- trained more than 150,000 Christian leaders in nonresidential settings (extension and correspondence courses, short-term courses and on-the-job training) and more than 20,000 in residential pastoral programs.
- worked with 1,772 international missionaries sent out by overseas Baptist partners to other people groups and 3,400 home missionaries reaching

out to people groups within their own countries.

The sheer number of lost people with little or no access to the Gospel, however, continues to weigh on the minds of IMB missionaries and strategists. The gap between current reality and a self-sustaining church movement in every people group remains huge.

The world's population is 6.5 billion and counting. Of the world's 11,000-plus people groups, more than 6,000 — encompassing more than 1.65 billion people — remain unreached with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Most of these peoples have seen no churches planted in their cultures within the last two years. At the end of 2005 more than 650 of those peoples, with a combined population exceeding 550 million, remained unengaged by any evangelical group.

The future

Fort said he wonders how Southern Baptists will respond to the ongoing global missions challenge as they contend with a growth crisis at home. The only global region with worse church-growth statistics than postmodern, secularized Western Europe, he reminded trustees, is the United States.

"Eighty percent of our churches in the [Southern Baptist] convention are reported as plateaued," which is another word for dying, Fort said. "We are losing ground. You know why that's a burden to me? Because as our [Southern Baptist] churches go, so goes the International Mission Board. As our convention goes, so goes our ability to engage a lost world with the Gospel."

"We're at a hinge in history when we have an opportunity to advance the Gospel into the final strongholds of the enemy. Satan is a fierce opponent. He is opposed to everything we stand for. He knows that his days are numbered. But if we're going to complete this task in this generation, we need a new work of God in our convention."

SBC President Page echoed

Fort's concerns in his remarks to trustees, urging Southern Baptist churches to seek repentance, confession, transformation and, most of all, revival.

"Across this nation I try to awaken our people to the fact that if we do not realize where the fight is and how it is to be fought, we're going to lose the battle and lose the war," Page said. "For 30 years we've been trying to raise baptism rates among non-revived people in non-revived churches. I'm asking across our convention that God's people will beg God to send revival to our land.... That's what we need."

Trustees paused for an extended time of prayer for personal and convention-wide revival.

President's report

In his president's report, Rankin highlighted his recent travel to South Korea, where he met with pastors and Korean evangelical mission leaders and spoke to several thousand Baptist seminary students.

"It was absolutely one of the most powerful experiences I have ever had," Rankin reflected. "The worship, the passion, the focus, literally hundreds of students making commitments to missionary service.... When they come down the aisle and make a commitment, they're fully expecting you to put a passport and airline ticket in their hand, and they're out of there. They're putting it all on the shelf to follow the Lord to the mission field."

In his interaction with Korean mission organizations, which report sending out more than 13,000 missionaries, Rankin found an eagerness to learn about church-planting movements and finish the task of reaching the unreached.

"I don't know what all God is doing through that, but I came home with the impression that if Southern Baptists don't step up to the task... He is moving to fulfill his mission" with or without U.S. Christians.

Looking back

New Orleans Seminary holds an inaugural service for Charles S. Kelly as he becomes the eighth president of the Southern Baptist seminary.

The Southern Baptist Annuity Board convenes in the Sky Room of the Baptist Building in Jackson, as part of a trustee-inspired plan to hold a board meeting once each year outside the Annuity Board's home office in Dallas.

M. Thomas Rankin, president of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, commends Baptists in Mississippi and across the SBC for the \$3.5 million post-war China relief campaign, which he says will advance Baptist work in China for at least 50 years.



MISSISSIPPI
BAPTISTS

THE SECOND
FRONT PAGE

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THE FIRST ASSOCIATION

In October 2006, I had the wonderful privilege of being with the folks in the churches of the Mississippi Baptist Association. Here in our state we have 67 associations, but the Mississippi Association was the very first one. In October they were celebrating their 200th Anniversary as an association of churches. During associational meeting time I usually have the privilege of being in a number of annual meetings, and at this one I had the honor of preaching at their celebration of 200 years. Can you imagine the cluster of churches down in Southwest Mississippi getting together in 1806 in a meeting that was the beginning of associational work in our state? When those pioneer Mississippi Baptists met, Thomas Jefferson was president of the United States and Mississippi was several years away from becoming a state. Lewis and Clark were on their expedition to find a route to the Northwest and arrived at the Pacific Ocean while the Baptists were getting together to find how the Lord would lead them and use them to expand His Kingdom in Mississippi. I was truly blessed and honored to be invited to come and speak at the celebration, and what a soul-stirring, Christ-honoring celebration it was.

It is amazing to think about those "early Baptist saints" and what they did and what they put in place. Without many of us knowing about it, they touched all of our lives with significant Kingdom work. The



Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

wonderful folks in the Mississippi Association 200 years later live with the names of those early believers and stalwart leaders still around them. Sometimes the rest of our churches and associations fail to recognize the blessings that they have passed on to us. The records of the beginnings of Mississippi Baptist work are laced with the names of faithful, firm, and fervent servants. That association had folks like Richard Curtis Jr., who was the first Baptist preacher ever to come to Mississippi, and Ezra Courtney, and Chloe Holt, who was the best known by the folks of that day and time as "Aunt Chloe." It is stirring to think about them and the scores of people who came to join with them, usually meeting in rustic log cabin houses of worship, preaching the Good News of Jesus the Savior, and seeking ways to extend and expand the touch of the love of God to everyone. They served the Lord Jesus with passion and joy.

In the early existence of those churches in the southwest part of our state, they quickly discovered a Biblical principle that they seized upon, nurtured, and enlarged

as they realized they could do much more together than they could ever do just on their own. Our churches today must not forget and surely must not lose what those early Baptist builders found to be so true. While God uses individual, local churches in a magnificent way, He also blesses and expands His work as we join together to accomplish tasks that no individual church can do alone. While I am blessed and encouraged and challenged as I see from a historical perspective what the Lord has done over the past 200 years, equally exciting is what the Lord continues to do through that first association and the dozens of others that now band together across our state.

Alton Foster is the missions director in Mississippi Association, and at the anniversary celebration he told his people, the churches that gathered for the event, that this was a birthday celebration and not a funeral occasion. Indeed, it was just that as our first association in the state continues to be alive and well and accomplishing what the Lord wants to carry out through them to honor His name. Over a year ago they completed the building and furnishing of a new associational complex. It is not just an office building; it is a resource center and a beehive of Baptist activity. There is no way that they could have known when they were planning, praying, raising funds, and working on that facility that there would be an immediate need to help touch the lives of people when the greatest natural disaster in our history came to Mississippi. When Hurricane

Katrina came they were ready to be a part of the huge network of churches and associations that would enter into the response to care for folks in need. They were prepared and they entered into the work with great zeal and energy.

Just think about it from an even larger perspective. Those churches came together to follow the Lord and to unite to do His work wherever needed and with whatever was needed. They had no idea in 1806 what they would be facing, but with unrelenting commitment to Christ they have carried on the work through a Civil War that almost ripped our nation into, through the dark days of a war that we called World War I, the huge war that enveloped the globe again that we called World War II, the Korean Conflict, Vietnam, and to the present terrorist conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq. Through it all there was a common denominator of a fellowship of churches in an association and later a convention of churches that would draw strength from each other and stay focused on sharing a Christ who brings hope when there seems to be none and a future when the days ahead seem too bleak.

Our first association and those who have bonded in Christ in the years that would follow did and continue to make a difference in our world. What a blessing it was to share in this moment of reflection with them to see what the Lord has done, but even more exciting is what the Lord has planned for us in the days ahead. It is a wonderful reminder for all of us who know the Lord of how much we need Him and how much we need each other even if at times we think we don't.

What a lesson to learn, that we got here together — and by the grace of God — we will face the future together in Him.

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YOU CAN RESPOND
RIGHT NOW!

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)

If you make a decision for Jesus Christ today, contact a local Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

Mississippi Pastor to Host

Northeast Cruise & Tour

Join other Southern Baptists and your Baptist Chaplain, Pastor Roy Meyers, visiting French Canada, Nova Scotia, and beautiful New England.

On June 8, 2007 fly from your closest major airport and be met by 'your man' at Boston's Logan International. After one night in Boston with an included city tour, board your 5-star cruise ship, Holland America Line's *ms Maasdam*. Your deluxe ship is designed to carry fewer passengers than other ships in her class. The *ms Maasdam* is one of the most spacious ships at sea with the finest service Holland is famous for. Sail to ports in Bar Harbor, Maine (a charming old fishing village); Halifax and Sydney in breathtaking Nova Scotia; Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island; cruise the Saguenay Fjord; and visit the French Canadian ports, on the St. Lawrence River, of Quebec City and Montreal. Let the local delicacies tempt you, different cultures spark your curiosity and enjoy the cooler climate. Start your one week historical motor coach tour visiting Montreal (with city tour); Kingston, NY via the Adirondack and Catskill Mountains; Hyde Park Mansions; Philadelphia (with city tour); New York City (with city tour); and travel along the Atlantic and Connecticut coast, through picturesque Rhode Island, back to Boston. Fly home June 22. Prices start at only \$2348 (per person, double occupancy) including all taxes, port charges, the motor coach tour with daily sightseeing, 7 nights in hotels, and the 7 day deluxe cruise. Includes roundtrip airfare from Memphis, TN; Memphis, TN; Gulfport/Biloxi or Jackson, MS. Other airports may be higher or lower. Ask for details. Space is limited. Friends and family are welcome.

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Convention (Cont'd from page one)

The effort to fill the Memorial with pennies is ongoing. For more information, visit www.mbc.org.

- commendation for Sherwood Church in Albany, Ga., for producing the Christian movie, *Facing the Giants*.

The movie, which depicts a fictional Christian high school football coach as he struggles with mounting failures in his life, continues to draw large crowds since its September release and has grossed \$7,217,000 at the box office.

- appreciation for the Conference Ministries Study Committee for their report on the future of MBC conference ministries and Gulfshore.

- appreciation to First Church, Jackson, for hosting the 2006 annual meeting.

Speakers

Chuck Register, pastor of First Church, Gulfport, delivered the convention sermon. Also preaching were MBC President Clarence Cooper, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board Executive Director-Treasurer Jim Futral, and Senior Pastor Fred Luter of Franklin Avenue Church in New Orleans. Jim Shaddix, senior pastor of Riverside Church in

Denver and former faculty member at New Orleans Seminary, presented the Bible Treasures series of devotionals.

Sharon Fanning, head women's basketball coach at Mississippi State University and a member of First Church, Starkville, gave her testimony during the November 1 morning session.

Worship

Providing worship through music were the Sanctuary Choir of Emmanuel Church, Grenada; Devotion Ensemble of First Church, Gulfport; and Mississippi Singing Churchmen.

Leading congregational praise were Barry Worrell, minister of music at Emmanuel Church, Grenada; Ken Nuss, minister of music at First Church, Gulfport; and L. Graham Smith, director of church music for the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

A total of 1,129 messengers registered for the 2006 annual meeting, up slightly from the 1,110 messengers at the 2005 meeting. The 2007 annual meeting of the Mississippi Baptist Convention will be held October 30-31 at First Church, Jackson.

Pastors' Wives meet in Jackson



FELLOWSHIP AROUND THE TABLES — Women from all over the state enjoyed fellowship at the Pastor's Wives Conference immediately prior to the Mississippi Baptist Convention annual meeting. The annual event is designed to encourage and equip the wives of pastors and staff members for the unique opportunities and challenges that come with the role. (Photo by Tony Martin)

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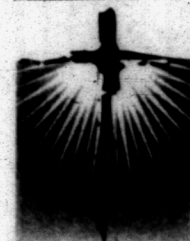
JUST FOR THE RECORD



1. Groundbreaking, Pleasant Hill Church, Lincoln County

1. **Pleasant Hill Church, Lincoln Association**, held a groundbreaking Oct. 15 for the construction of their 17,000 square foot new building, which will include a fellowship hall, nurseries, children's classrooms, and classrooms with a large assembly area for youth. Shown are the participants.

Sunday School. Shown from left to right: Downs; Billie Ishee, Sunday School Director; and Leggett.



MISSISSIPPI
BAPTISTS

2. **Park Haven Church, Laurel**, recognized Jimmy Downs and Jim Leggett on Oct. 1 with perfect attendance for one year in



2. Perfect Attendance, ParkHaven Church, Laurel

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JUST FOR THE RECORD



MISSISSIPPI BAPTISTS



1. Clergy Appreciation, Calvary Church, Oak Grove



2. Crowe and Granger, Strong Hope Church, Wesson



3. Ordinations, Steele Church, Forest



4. Deacon Ordination,
First Church, State Line



5. Hurdle honored,
Slayden Church, Lamar

1. Calvary Church, Oak Grove, recognized church staff members for Clergy Appreciation Month. Shown are pastor Jeff Floyd, David Jacks, Georganna McLain, and Daniel Lee.

2. Strong Hope Church, Wesson, ordained Vic Granger as deacon. Shown are David Crowe and Granger.

3. Steele Church, Forest, recently honored their three ordained ministers with gifts and a lunch. Shown are Dale Round, Austin Griffin, and Reggie Williams.

4. First Church, State Line, recently ordained Ernest (Pete) Gardner as deacon. Shown are Gardner and Marilyn Gardner.

5. Slayden Church, Lamar, honored Nellie Hurdle, chairman of the church's hospitality committee, with a surprise trip for two to Hawaii during a recent committee-sponsored Hawaiian luau.

6. Bethsaida Church, Philadelphia, presented the Living Lord's Supper Oct. 29. Shown are pastor Billy James as Jesus washing the feet of one of his disciples, Ralph White. Also shown, from left, are Dennis Williams, Kenny Pierce, Bob Smith, and Royce Smith.

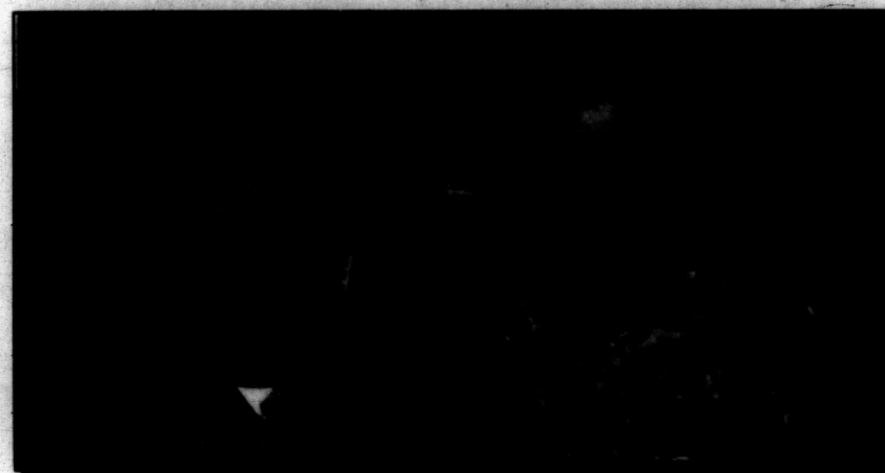
7. Utica Church, Utica, recently recognized Edna Earl Cessna and Margaret Harrison with 48 years and 54 years of teaching Sunday School, respectively. Shown are Cessna and Harrison.

8. First Church, Byram, honored their staff with a luncheon. Shown, left to right, front row, are Lew King, Carl Prewitt, and Jack Phillips; second row, Larry Boyd, Ann Kuhn, Lisa McCoy, and Barney Byrd; back row, Rachel Patrick, Jackie Cunningham, April Seavy, and Katherine Dedeaux.

9. Big Level Church, Wiggins, recently ordained Leslie



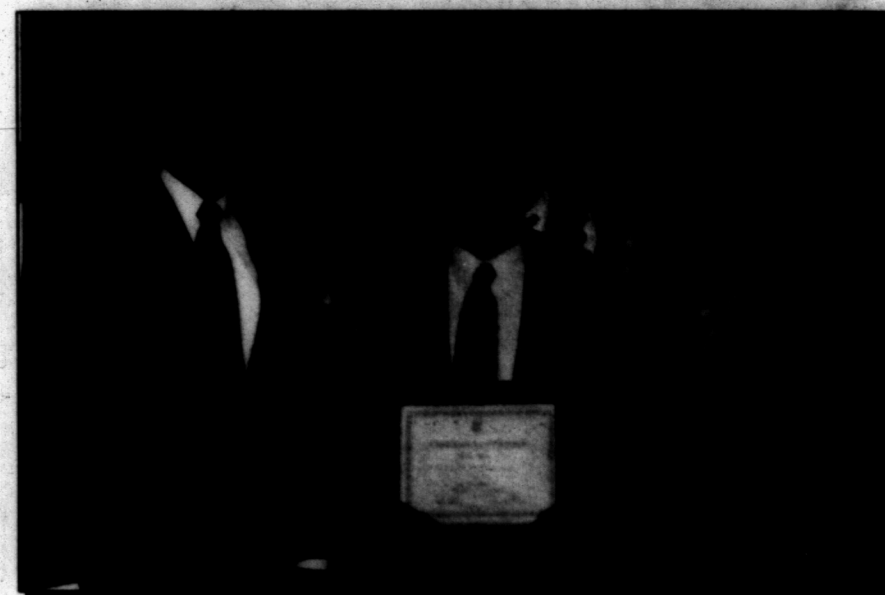
6. Living Lord's Supper, Bethsaida Church, Philadelphia



7. Cessna and Harrison honored, Utica Church, Utica



8. Staff Honored at Luncheon, First Church, Byram



9. Deacon Ordination, Big Level Church, Wiggins

Ross as deacon. Shown are pastor David Perry, Ross, and Elizabeth Ross.

10. Hope Church, Neshoba Association, ordained Wade Bobo as deacon Sept. 3.

JUST FOR THE RECORD

11. Mission Team, Tishomingo Association

11. Five couples from Tishomingo Association went on a mission trip to Bethel Church, Poplarville, to finish out 23,000 sq. ft. of sheetrock in the aftermath of Katrina. Shown, from left, are Bobby and Charlotte Scott, Bobby and Ollie Cobb, Archie and Barbara Berryman, Troy and Myra Dean, and George and Becky Monroe.

12. First Church, Terry, recently recognized Julie Jones for one year perfect Sunday School attendance. Jones is shown with John Pace, Jr., and Toby Jones.



12. Perfect Attendance, First Church, Terry



13. Perfect Attendance, Salem Church, Toomsaba

13. Salem Church, Toomsaba, recognized John Johnson for 46 years of perfect attendance in Sunday School. Shown are Melody Black and Johnson.

14. First Church, Sand Hill, emphasized the Margaret Lackey State Mission Offering with a fellowship dinner and Sweet Tooth Queen contest. Connie Walley was crowned queen, and the church exceeded their offering goal. Shown, back, are Ethleen Shattles, Walley, and Emma Freeman; front, Luke Montalvo and Marlee Montalvo.

15. The youth, children, and adults of Sebastopol Church, Sebastopol, collected \$1,100 in rice bowls for world hunger. Shown, front, is Judy Adams; back, William Adams, Clint Adams, Lacey Gilmore, Evan Miles, Ricky Savell, and Tyler Gilmore.

16. Sylvarena Church, Wesson, recently ordained Buddy Boyd and Jim Hulton as deacons. Shown are Boyd and Hulton.

17. First Church, Pascagoula, recently burned the note on their \$2 million mortgage, paying off a 15-year loan in eight years. Shown, from left, are Moreno Jones, Dennis Ray Smith, Mitch McNabb, and Rex Yancey, pastor.

18. Calvary Church, Waynesboro, held their annual great day of service Oct. 21, with over 90 church members cleaning houses, cut and cleaning yards, and delivering meals throughout the county.

19. First Church, Terry, surpassed its \$2000 goal for the Margaret Lackey State Missions Offering by giving \$2,457.

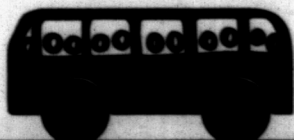
20. Goss Church, Columbia, will be a drop-off point for Operation Christmas Child Nov. 13-19. For more information, call (601) 736-9563.

21. Concord Church, Benton-Tippah Association, will have a bake sale Nov. 10 at the People's Bank, Ripley, 8:30 a.m., and a hamburger and hot dog fundraiser at the Wal-Mart, Ripley, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., to help raise funds for a family life center.

22. Benton Church, Benton, will host a Thanksgiving worship service Nov. 19, 5 p.m., with a meal at 6 p.m. For information, call (662) 673-9708.

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14. Sweet Tooth Queen contest, First Church, Sand Hill



15. World Hunger Collection, Sebastopol Church, Sebastopol



16. Deacon Ordination, Sylvarena Church, Wesson



17. Noteburning, First Church, Pascagoula

Bibliocipher

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KHJ ELKE FTXHEKHYX
KHJ FXZMNNMPH PV
NMHN NLPDRJ WX
TFXKYLXJ MH LMN HKZX
KZPHS KRB HKEMPHN
WXSMHHMHS KE
QXFDNKRKXZ

RDUX EAXHEO-VPDF
VPFEO-NXGXH

Clue: T = P

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Luke Five:Thirty-One.

College News



2. Mississippi College Scout Team



3. Mississippi College Naturals

1. William Carey University announced the recipients of the 2007 Higher Education Appreciation Day — Working for Academic Excellence Award (HEADWAE). Mary Stewart, dean and associate professor of nursing, and Amanda Lawler, a biology major from Hattiesburg, will be honored at the HEADWAE awards banquet to be held in February in Jackson. These awards are given by the state of Mississippi to educators and students who demonstrate excellence in education. Seventy-two students and faculty from 36 Mississippi public and private universities and colleges were honored in 2006. Established in 1988 by legislative resolution, HEADWAE honors individual academic achievement and the overall contribution of the state's public and private institutions of higher learning.

2. The Mississippi College Scout Team is proud to announce that 10 students have been selected to join the student recruitment team. Interviews were held recently to select these esteemed students who will serve Mississippi College and prospective students throughout their career at Mississippi College. Pictured (left to right): Back Row — Amanda Bridges, Brandon Kelsev Ballard, Ridgeland; Allison McKee, Pineville, La.; Shaun Konstant, Spring Hill, Fla.; Erin Wood, Waynesboro; Patrick Chandler, Southaven; and Becca Grice, Southaven. Front Row — Bethany Boteler, Richland; Rebecca Smith, Wesson; and Cary O'Quinn, Tuscaloosa, Ala.

3. Holiday Spectacular: the Mississippi College Naturals annual holiday dinner show, will be presented in Anderson Hall of the B. C. Rogers Student Center on the college campus Nov. 16, 17, and 18. Dinner starts at 6:30 p.m. with the performance beginning promptly at 7:00 p.m. For additional information and to reserve tickets, call the office of The Naturals at (601) 925-3809. You may also visit <http://www.mc.edu/campuslife/naturals/index.html>. Members of the Naturals include: Front (l - r) — Lauren Rogers, Laura Wilkes, Shera Zimmerman, Elizabeth Wallace, Jan Jefcoat. Back row (l - r) — Jonathan Nutt, Jordan Carmean, Aaron Dollar, and David Parker. Not pictured is Harley McAlexander.

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Obituary

W. Leven Moore, 85, passed away Oct. 26. Funeral services were Oct. 29 at First Church, Kosciusko, with Barry Corbett officiating.

Moore held degrees from Clarke College, Mississippi College, and Southern Seminary. He was married to the former Pauline Rone. He pastored churches in Mississippi, Alabama, and Kentucky. Most recently he pastored First Church, Pontotoc, from 1960-1974, and was Atlanta Association's Associational Missions Director until his retirement in 1985. After retirement he served as interim in several central Mississippi churches, and authored two books, *Journey Toward Blindness* and *Like A Mighty River*. He served the Mississippi Baptist Convention in several capacities and was a member of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board and chairman of the Plans and Policies Committee for the Sunday School Board.

He is survived by his wife Pauline, two sisters, Nell Moore Godwin of Newton and Mattie Eva Moore and her husband Alton of Doyline, La. Surviving brothers are Ned Moore and his wife Peggy of Lillian, Ala., and Mark Moore of Newton, Miss. His surviving sisters-in-law are Betty Ruth Moore (Kelva), Lovonia (Ewell) and Jean (Elton).

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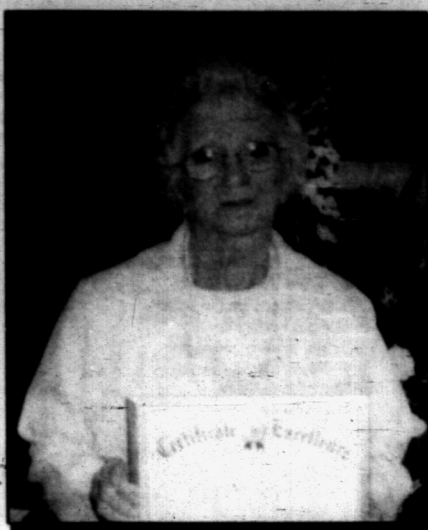
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JUST FOR THE RECORD



23. Ordinations, Roundaway Church, Doddsville



24. Ates, Rocky Hill Church, Smith County



25. Deacon Ordination, Antioch Church, Brandon

23. **Roundaway Church, Doddsville**, ordained Alton and Greg Lassett to the ministry Oct. 22. Shown are Alton Lassett, Gregg Lassett, and pastor Bob Hill.
24. **Rocky Hill Church, Smith County**, presented Vondell Johnson Ates with a certificate of excellence for 50 years of service as church secretary/clerk.

25. **Antioch Church, Brandon**, recently ordained Chris Carter and Timmy White as deacons. Shown, left, are Michelle, Chris, Ben, and Reed Carter; right, Timmy, Tish, Kaci, and John Thomas White.

STAFF CHANGES

1. **New Pleasantdale Church, Philadelphia**, has called Tommy Miles as pastor, who began service Aug. 27. He and his wife Sheena live in Morton and have served in bivocational ministry for 30 years.
2. **First Church, Eupora**, has called Travis Gray as pastor effective Oct. 15. He is a graduate of Mississippi College and New Orleans Seminary. He comes with his wife Angela and children, Drew, Micah, and Rachel.



Miles

REVIVALS & HOMECOMINGS

Beulah Church, Newton County: Revival, Nov. 12-15; Sun., 10:55 a.m., followed by meal and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Kevin Meador, Prayer Closet Ministries, Hickory, speaker; Tony Massey, speaker; Keith Ramage, pastor.

Crossroads Church, Petal: Revival, Nov. 12-15; Sun., 11 a.m. and 5 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Scott Murphy, speaker; Jerry Purvis, music; Jimmie Windham, pastor.

Line Creek Church, Morton: Homecoming, Nov. 12; Sunday School, 10 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m., followed by lunch and cemetery meeting; Mike Everett, speaker; Tal Vardaman, music.

Southside Church, Vicksburg: Revival, Nov. 19-22; Sun., 11 a.m., followed by harvest dinner and singing and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Warren Family, Fort Valley, Ga., music and message.

Union Chapel Church, Shannon: Homecoming, Nov. 19; worship, 10:30 a.m., followed by lunch and fellowship; Casey Jones, pastor.

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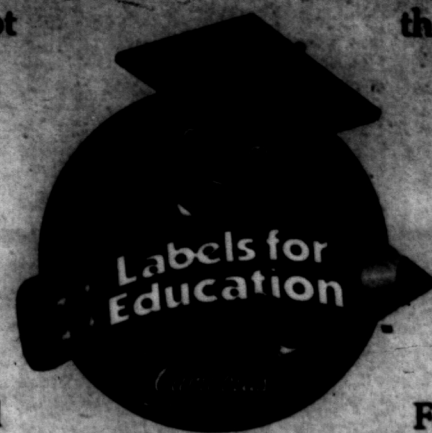
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FAMILY BIBLE STUDY

Live in Light, Not Darkness

Isaiah 8:18 - 9:7

By Arthur Story

Our world becomes more and more tumultuous every day. As a result, uncertainty about the future is a major issue in people's lives. Fluctuating oil prices, terrorism, school violence, corporate cutbacks, political scandals, the growing hostility toward Christianity in our nation, and other issues we hear about daily cause people to ask the question, "How can I be sure of what the future holds?" Isaiah speaks to this question in this week's study of Isaiah 8:18 - 9:7.

The first of Isaiah's instructions points to the need to turn to God's Word for answers (Isaiah 8:18-22). The people of Judah were afraid because of the plan of Pekah, the king of Israel, and Rezin, the king of Aram, to wage war against Jerusalem (2 Kings 16, Isaiah 7). Instead of

trusting God, Ahaz, the king of Judah, sought an alliance with Tiglath-pileser, the king of Assyria, because of this threat. In submitting himself to the Assyrian king, Ahaz reveals where he is placing his faith (2 Kings 16:7). Like Ahaz and the people of Judah, our response to difficult times reveals a great deal about our spiritual condition. In times of despair it is useless to trust ourselves or others to do what only God can do. Worse yet, is to consult "spirits" and "spiritists" as the people of Judah were doing (verse 19), a practice which God has expressly forbidden (Leviticus 19:31). In times of uncertainty, we should draw our strength and assurance from God and His revealed Word. To do anything less is to choose to "wander . . . dejected and hungry" and to be unable to

Story

see beyond earthly afflictions (8:21-22). Isaiah provides a second instruction in Isaiah 9:1-5. Here he points to the need to look for God to act. Despite the disheartening prospect of their current and impending circumstances, God would act on the behalf of His people. The people of Judah could only see what was currently happening but Isaiah informed them that God had a future plan for them. Here is a powerful word for us in disheartening times. Despite what is happening that could discourage us, God has informed us that He has a bright and glorious future for His children. Our circumstances and this world are fleeting compared to the eternity that awaits us. The darkness of sin, persecution, our battle with the adversary, and more will pass away along with this temporal existence. Like the darkness of Judah would turn to light (verses 2-4), the darkness of our earthly existence will give way to the light of our glorious eternity.

Isaiah's third instruction comes in Isaiah 9:6-7. Here he directs the people to live in the light of God's sovereignty. Considering the potential attack of Aram and Isreal, some of the people of Judah no doubt thought that to wait on God was foolish when they could align themselves with Assyria. Christians and churches face this challenge today. Will we choose to trust the sovereign God of creation to protect us and meet our needs or will we trust in worldly wisdom? Theologically, we know that the only answers on living life that are worthy of hearing come from God. Yet, from a pragmatic stance many choose to follow the ideologies of the world. As a result many Christians and churches abandon clear Scriptural instruction because they don't see themselves as capable and are thus unwilling to trust God. As Isaiah points out, the one we serve is the "Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace" (verse 6) and His reign

is forever (verse 7). The reign of those who persecuted Judah was temporal. The reign of those who persecute God's children today is also only temporal. The day is coming when the Sovereign God of the universe will no longer withhold His judgement of those who oppose Him, therefore, we must choose trust Him rather than fear the current circumstances.

The future is frightening and disheartening to many. For those of us who know Christ, the future stirs us. It stirs us to trust God despite the appearance of things because we know he holds the future. How can I be sure of what the future holds? Trust God! As the hymn God Holds His Future in His Hands by James Rowe and James D. Vaughn so eloquently states, "Dread not the things that are ahead, The burdens great, the sinking sands, The thorns that o'er the path are spread, God holds the future in His hands."

Story is Minister of Education, First Church, Louisville.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Exhibit Your Faith

Hebrews 11:1-3, 6-8, 13-19, 24-26

By Cyndi Grace

Throughout this study of Hebrews, God's desire of a relationship with us has been prominent in the text. He has gone to great lengths to achieve this first by walking in the garden daily with His dearly loved creation and after sin entered the world, dwelling among His people in the Ark of the Covenant—showing Himself in the cloud of fire. When the time was right, His Son, Jesus Christ, became like us and lived among us until His sacrificial death and resurrection removed the curse forever from the lives of believers. It has always been God reaching to us, and only wanting that we believe Him—believe He is the one true God and believe that

He only wants the best for us. This belief is called faith!

Defining faith it is far easier than living it. Our writer begins with a profound thought: faith believes God created all things! Our world increasingly believes this world "just happened" and when asked how we know God is the Creator, there is no concrete evidence—we just know it, by faith. For the Christian this is easy; this incredible world could only be created by a God who loves us and made this earth for us to enjoy: oceans, mountains, star-filled night skies and intricate spider webs cause us to stare in wonder! My husband loving the colors of fall often comments, "God didn't have to do this this way! He did it for our enjoyment!"

Grace

Believing God is the Master Creator is much easier than exhibiting faith in our personal lives. Mistakenly, we think we have some control over this part of creation and when things don't work out like we want them we lose faith. Perhaps the hardest times to exhibit faith is when hope is deferred! Most of us are great at "faithing" when the unseen becomes visible in less than a week! We rejoice and praise God loudly but when His timing isn't in sync with ours and it is months, perhaps years, before we see our faith fleshed out, we might begin to doubt His will or even doubt His love. It is then He gently teaches that His mightiest work is done through the waiting; that is when the relationship is strengthened. Those in our passage today, showed faith. For some, like Noah and Abraham, it was years before their faith became sight; for

others like Isaac "the sight" never came in his lifetime, but we have the evidence that God was faithful. The commonality among these heroes of the faith, is that they acted upon what God said would happen. They believed Him! Joshua might have thought walking around a wall for seven days and then shouting and blowing horns was a strange command but he did it and God was faithful. Our faith must have feet for often our love of God is best demonstrated by showing Him unfailing trust of Him in every area of our lives.

I am an absolute idiot concerning my granddaughter. I want the best for her and do everything within my power to protect her. Although she hugs and kisses and tells me she loves me, I feel that her love to me most when she trusts me. She shows that trust by asking me to kiss a scratch to make it better. If when I picked her up from school she exclaimed tearfully, "Oh, I wasn't really sure you would be here today!", I would be crushed. But

when she grabs my hand and we simply walk to the car, she expresses her love to me in a deep and less apparent way; she just believes I will be there for her. It is the same with our relationship with God. It pleases Him most when He knows we trust Him. It demonstrates our love for Him in a tangible way, shows we absolutely trust Him, and strengthens our relationship.

Read Matthew 7: 7-11 and ask if you really believe God wants to do good for you? Where are you having trouble trusting God? Ask Him to help your unbelief. Do you have some "hope deferred?" Is doubt crouching at your doorstep? Remember God is in control. He loves you and perhaps you need to just show Him you trust and love Him by taking hold of His hand and walking, by faith, where ever He is leading. He is there and will prove faithful! Trust Him!

Grace is a women's conference speaker and women's ministry director at Highland Church, Vicksburg.

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